



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

South Florida Ecological Services Office

1339 20th Street

Vero Beach, Florida 32960



March 4, 2004

Colonel Robert M. Carpenter
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Boulevard, Room 372
Jacksonville, Florida 32207-8175

Dear ^{Bob} Colonel Carpenter:

We are pleased to provide the enclosed Planning Aid Report (PAR) as part of our contribution to the Initial Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Update (ICU). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) have prepared this PAR in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958 (48 Stat. 401, as amended: 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*) (FWCA) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA). The purpose of the ICU is to update the 1999 Central and Southern Florida Project Comprehensive Review Study plan represented by model run D13R (Restudy Plan), and documented in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) *Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, Central and Southern Florida Project Comprehensive Review Study* (Programmatic EIS) (Corps 1999). Because the ICU is a technical update of the Restudy Plan and not a decision-making process contemplating changes to the Restudy Plan, we will provide planning assistance updating our March 1, 1999, FWCA Report on the Restudy Plan through this and subsequent PARs rather than through a new FWCA Report.

This PAR provides a program-level analysis and planning tools to maximize benefits and minimize impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitats, state listed species, and the natural ecosystems on which they depend during siting and construction of CERP features. The body of the report focuses on project-by-project and program-level analyses of possible benefits and impacts to listed species resulting from the construction or "footprint" of CERP, along with recommendations to maximize these benefits and minimize these impacts. The hydrologic, or downstream, effects of CERP components are addressed here only for those CERP components that are not included in South Florida Water Management Model modeling conducted as part of the ICU. Our analysis of the hydrologic effects of those components modeled as part of ICU will be presented in a later PAR. The PAR also includes extensive recommendations on recovery actions from the *South Florida Multi-Species Recovery Plan* that the Corps may wish to implement as part of the CERP in furtherance each Federal agency's duty under section 7(a)(1) of the ESA to use their authorities in Colonel



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furtherance of the protection and recovery of federally listed species and the habitats upon which they depend.

The CERP provides an unprecedented opportunity for restoration of habitat and recovery of species on a landscape scale. We pledge our continuing support in providing recommendations to maximize these landscape opportunities while minimizing potential adverse effects to the natural system. If you have any questions, please contact me at 772-562-3909 or Senior Biologists Heather McSharry (772-562-3909, extension 247) or Marilyn Stoll (772-562-3909, extension 229).

Sincerely yours,



James J. Slack
Field Supervisor
South Florida Ecological Services Office

Enclosures

cc w/Enclosures:

Service, Atlanta, Georgia (Cindy Dohner)
Service, A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Boynton Beach, Florida (Mark Musaus)
Service, Jacksonville, Florida (Miles Meyer)
Department of the Interior, SFERTF, Miami, Florida (Rock Salt)
National Park Service, Everglades National Park, Homestead, Florida (Acting Superintendent)
U.S. Geological Survey, Miami, Florida (G. Ronnie Best)
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Eastern Regional Office, Nashville, Tennessee (Kenneth Bailey)
Environmental Protection Agency, West Palm Beach, Florida (Richard Harvey)
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Vero Beach, Florida (Joseph Walsh)
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, West Palm Beach, Florida (Linda McCarthy)
Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, Florida
South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach, Florida (Henry Dean)
Miccosukee Tribe, Miami, Florida
Seminole Tribe, Hollywood, Florida
Miami-Dade County DERM, Miami, Florida (Gwen Burzycki)